

REMARKS

This responds to the Office Action dated February 17, 2005, and the references cited therewith.

Claim 12 is amended, and no claims are canceled or added. Claims 1-18 remain pending in this application.

§102 Rejection of the Claims

Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kramer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,754,506). The Kramer et al. patent was first published after the filing date of the present application and is therefore not prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection on this basis. Furthermore, applicant has amended claim 12 herein to overcome any rejection based upon 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

§103 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1-6 and 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Skubitz et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,851,226) in view of Kramer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,754,506). Claims 7, 8 and 15-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Skubitz et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,851,226) in view of Kramer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,754,506) and further in view of Adinolfi (U.S. Patent No. 5,109,841). Claims 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kramer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,754,506).

The Kramer et al. patent issued after the filing date of present application and is therefore prior art to the present application, if at all, only under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). In view of the common ownership of the present application and the Kramer et. al patent as set forth below, applicant asserts that the latter is not prior art to the present application for purposes of 35 U.S.C. 103 and that the rejections of the claims on this basis have been overcome.

Statement of Common Ownership

Applicant declares that, at the time the present invention was made, the present application and U.S. Patent No. 6,754,506 were owned by the same entity. Since that patent could only otherwise qualify as prior art to the present application under 35 U.S.C. 102(e), it is disqualified as prior art for purposes of section 103(a) under 35 U.S.C. 103(c).

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance, and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney at (847) 432-7302 to facilitate prosecution of this application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743.

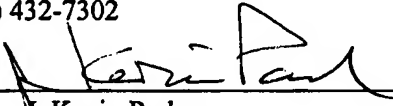
Respectfully submitted,

RODNEY W. SALO

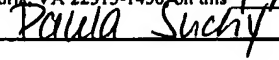
By his Representatives,

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Date 5-17-05

By 
J. Kevin Parker
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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 17 day of May, 2005.


Name


Signature